

Beed 48.

THOUGHTS

ON THE

PRINCE'S DEBTS.

Quem penitet peccasse poene est innocens.

SENeca.

THIRD EDITION;

TO WHICH IS ADDED

A PREFACE, containing AN ANECDOTE.



L O N D O N :

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2 T H O U G H T

“ The time is always hastening forward,
“ when this triumph poor as it is shall vanish,
“ and when those who now surround him
“ with obsequiousness and compliments,
“ fawn among his equipage and animate his
“ riots, shall turn upon him with insolence
“ and reproach him with vices promoted by
“ themselves.”

RAMBLER, NO. 53.

“ That riches rarely purchase friends, thou
“ didst soon discover, when thou wert left to
“ stand thy trial *uncountenanced* and *alone*.
“ Yet think not riches useless; there are
“ purposes to which a wise man may be de-
“ lighted to apply them; they may, by a ra-
“ tional distribution to those who want them,
“ ease the pains of helpless disease, still the
“ throbs of restless anxiety, relieve innocence
“ from oppression, and raise imbecility to
“ cheerfulness and vigour.”

RAMBLER, NO. 120.

RAMBLER, NO. 120.

(vi)

P R E F A C E

TO THE

T H I R D E D I T I O N .

THE public ought to know that the author of this trifle has some little grounds for hoping he has not offended the accomplished and illustrious personage, whom these pages concern, by the censure which they do not hesitate to convey.

This is not said on my own account, but on account of my country: for let it be remembered (and it will, I trust, be remembered with pleasure by future times), that he, who does not take offence at strong censure thrown upon the past, and who does not turn aside from the perusal of what speaks rather strongly about the absolute necessity of reformation as to the future, is, already in great measure, all that his friends can wish to

see him, and all that his enemies and the enemies of his family and his country would be sorry to behold him.

For the same reason, I do not alter, and never shall alter, a syllable of what was necessarily written and printed between Friday morning, May the first, and Monday noon. By softening down what burst from the feelings of the moment, I know that I might exhibit myself in a better light as a courtier; but I hope that I had better views in originally writing this.

electric Example is a mighty chain, the first minute, ~~magnetic~~ link of which can be seen by every eye, and can be touched by every hand; but latest posterity will not be able to say, "This is the last link", till Time shall shake out the last remaining grain of lingering sand, and, finally, break his hour-glass.

Should the descendants of George the Third, monarch after monarch (as I trust in God they will), feel themselves authorised to apply the lines I quote from Thomson's play of Tancred; that, alone, will reflect honour enough upon such a trifle as this: for the oldest and the wisest man, among us all, has lived to very little purpose, if he have not the strongest

strongest conviction upon his mind, that, from the circumstances of the Prince's debts, there never was a moment so threatening as this to the constitution, both with regard to Prince and people; provided either feel any concern for that branch, of which, along with Lords and Commons, our happy constitution consists.

With regard to the illustrious person, who is the subject of these pages, Shakespeare says,

There is a tide, in the affairs of men,
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune.

At what precise moment this world's tide is to be taken, I will not pretend to say; and, those who do, decide only from their own good fortune, and accuse others of less judgment than themselves, when they have only perhaps been guilty of having less luck. But, that *there is a tide in the affairs of men*, we must all of us confess; if we fix our eyes, for only half a day, on the fluctuations of public opinion. I will venture to prophecy that this tide will soon turn, and turn so much the more strongly in favour of the Prince, on account of his Royal Highness's future conduct, and in consequence of the
violent

violent manner, in which, by various methods, it is now *made* to run the contrary way. The tide will, very soon, turn in the Prince's favour, throughout all the channels, creeks, and corners of his royal father's islands: and, in proportion as every honest heart at present laments to see so stately and gallant a vessel stranded and rendered in a manner useless, we shall, all rejoice, and join in unfeigned cheers, the moment that the tide shall lift it up again, and restore it to its usual and useful functions—the moment that we shall again see our old favourite

—— proudly riding o'er the azure realm;
 Regardless of the sweeping Whirlwind's sway,
 That, hush'd in grim repose, expects his evening prey.

How grimly the enemies of his Royal Highness expect and wish for the final ruin of his reputation, and how they hope, beyond the force of any expressions which can be borrowed from Gray or any poet, that he is not resolved to redeem his character, no readers but themselves will deny.

The magnitude and the number of the falsehoods, heaped upon his Royal Highness at this moment, are in exact proportion to the elevation of his rank, and the measure of his

his late merited popularity: a mountain is not to be overwhelmed by what would crush a molehill. But, every hour, falsehood after falsehood moulders away, and crumbles into dirt from which it sprung. They must not, however, expect me to lend them existence by recording them: yet I will relate one little anecdote, which I know to be fact; which may serve to show the source of most of these reports, that we now know to be false; and which would almost weigh against them, though they were all true.

A certain Prince of Wales (who, with such a heart as this anecdote proves him to have, cannot, in such an honourable nation as this, long remain unpopular) was the wanton subject of conversation, a few years ago, in the Piazza coffee-house.

After the gentlemen (for they were not the waiters of the coffee-house, who held such language; the waiters would have had better manners)—after the gentlemen had sufficiently tired themselves, and all the coffee-room, with abusing the Prince, in terms the most gross, and evidently about many things that they could not know to be true, and some that they must know to be false; one
of

of the auditors, who was really a gentleman, interfered.

He requested to be, at length, allowed to eat his chop in quiet; unannoyed by this voluntary committee on the character of a Prince, whom he had not at all the honour to know: he observed, that their conduct, though somewhat unusual, was not altogether original; since Montaigne, or some one had said, "if we cannot attain to greatness, let us take our revenge by railing at it"—and he begged to assure them, that, with all their public abhorrence of vices and failings which of course they never committed themselves, he was persuaded, were they acquainted with any of his committing, they would not dare to correct him, before his face, in exactly the same way they had taken his Royal Highness to task before the waiters, when he was too far off to hear or to answer their charges.

This, immediately, irritated the gentleman of the party, who possessed most spirit; and he, instantly, proceeded to revenge himself—on the Prince. He asserted that their late abuse, as it had been called, was kindness, compared with what he, for one, could say and could prove of the Prince: he declared that

that no language could come up to what he knew to be fact: and he desired to ask whether the youngest waiter in the coffee-room would not agree with him, when it should be known, that the Prince had bought a horse of him, and paid him, in part, with a note for 800*l.*—that the Prince had sold the horse for 1000*l.* more than he gave for it—but that the eldest son of the King had not paid a shilling of his note.

A different scale now kicked the beam; every listening knife and fork in the coffee-room now went to work again, the question being finally settled; the waiters, young and old, crowded round the voluntary and virtuous committee, requesting them to want something; and the solitary advocate was left, according to his request, to eat his chop in quiet, unannoyed by the attendance of a single waiter.

But my unfortunate gentleman was not to be so satisfied. Though he knew nothing of the ill-used note-holder, he knew a little of human nature; and, as soon as the hum in favour of his opponent had subsided, he desired to finish this trial at bar by saying, “that he did not believe the honourable gen-
 b “ tleman’s

“ gentleman’s assertion ; but, if it were true, he
 “ happened to be richer, just at that time,
 “ than he generally was, and he was ready to
 “ give 800l., or more, for the note. This
 “ would, in all events, prove his own opinion
 “ of the Prince’s honour, from what he
 “ knew ; and the honourable gentleman’s an-
 “ swer would prove the falsity of the charge,
 “ or why the gentleman would retain such a
 “ note, or both.”

The honourable gentleman answered, “ he
 “ cared little what it might be construed to
 “ prove ; but he had a whim in keeping the
 “ note (which he feared would remain with
 “ him long enough), and he should not part
 “ with it.” Upon this, they called for ano-
 “ ther bottle of claret, and my gentleman for a
 “ bill ; after paying which, and asking whether
 “ any one of the party had any further com-
 “ mands for him, he quitted the coffee-room
 “ through a long lane of bowing waiters, not-
 “ withstanding he had given them rather less
 “ than their usual perquisite. Some of those
 “ who remained, called to mind the anecdote
 “ of Raleigh, and the riot and his history, in
 “ the Tower.

The present anecdote proves a good deal
 about

about the truth of the stories, which we now hear; and which are either invented or renewed, on the present occasion, in so *unmanly* a way. But I have not quite finished.

The person whom this anecdote concerns, and who is by nature as well as rank the **FIRST GENTLEMAN** among the King's subjects, heard of what had passed, and sent for the defender of his note, then totally unknown to him; related the anecdote just as it happened; and desired to know if exactly this had taken place. Being told "exactly," and having said what such conduct called for; John Bull's Prince of Wales desired to vindicate his own character, by begging that the gentleman would call on Mr. Tatterfall, and hear how long it was, *before* this conversation, that Mr. T. paid the note, and then would go to the note-holder, from whose personal warmth there seemed but little danger, and on the Prince's part inform him, that "he
 " knew the price of the horse was settled to
 " be 1500l., instead of 1000l., on condition
 " of the seller's waiting a year or two for
 " his money; that, notwithstanding this
 " agreement, he applied for the money two
 " months after, when the Prince sent him

“ 700l. and this note for 800l.—that he
 “ would please to acknowledge this note had
 “ been paid by Mr. Tatterfall, on the Mon-
 “ day before the Sunday on which he held
 “ this language of the Prince for not having
 “ paid it—that such was not the conduct of
 “ a gentleman—and that the Prince was per-
 “ fectly ready to descend from a station,
 “ where of course it was hoped such language
 “ would not reach his ears, in order to meet
 “ the note-holder and prove that he did not
 “ deserve it.”

Let the Prince of Wales's enemies, with
 this honourable character at their head, relate
 any story, among those they have *invented*,
 which tells as much *against* his Royal High-
 ness, as this, in *many* respects, tells *for* him.—

One word, about the debts; with regard to
 the creditors; and with regard to the credit
 of the country.

Some, who were asserted to be creditors to
 a considerable amount, turn out, now, to have
 no demands. Of those, who have demands,
 the fair and honourable tradesmen have every
 claim on the justice of their countrymen.
 Should their demands be settled, presently,
 with as much haste and warmth, as we have
 already

already seen in some parts of this question, I maintain that justice will not be done.

If any committee take unfair advantage of its powers, and curtail such fair debts as I now speak of, without adverting to the circumstances under which they were contracted, what is done? the Prince is disgraced, and a great nation acts, precisely, as our present complaints say, the lowest of the Prince's tradesmen have acted by him—the tradesmen are swindled out of their money.

This is fact; and it is inflaming the public mind against those, who may have got their money as honourably as a builder or any other tradesman, to tell, in the House of Commons or any where, of buckles, for which the Prince was made to give three times as much as a common purchaser. The present circumstances prove, that the seller of buckles had a right to charge the Prince considerably more than a common purchaser; and whoever shall tax his bill to the common price (though many of the bills will perhaps be found to charge no more), I maintain will not act justly.

They, who charged the Prince a fair price, have a right to the interest of their money, after

after a fair period. Others have a right to demand, in the face of the country, that all the articles in their bills shall stand at a price, not three times more than a common purchaser pays, but certainly at a price to make them and their families sufficient amends for the delay of payment. Otherwise, what part do we act?

Let us be dispassionate, and give plain answers to plain questions. At this moment, is it so very clear that the debts will be paid in 7, 8, 9, or even in 27 years (the first plan)? or that the most distressed among the Prince's creditors can stave off his own ruin, by carrying his debt to market and turning it into money? Will any Member of the House of Commons, or any Member of the Lords (who have not yet had the question before them) purchase any of these debts at any price? Should not the doubt, even at this moment, of their being *ever* paid (the last Prince of Wales's never will be paid, perhaps), fairly justify some addition to the fair price, even for the *present* risk and anxiety?—But, however my last question may be answered, this I boldly ask, and defy any one to answer in the affirmative.

Have

Have we a right to reduce every article in the Prince's bills to the bonâ-fide market-price; and then to tell our countrymen, that they may expect payment, from the heir-apparent to the crown, for those articles and for such as originally stand so, in 27 years, or in 9, 8, or even 7, after they have already remained unpaid so long a time?

To appoint a committee to stop any of the creditors on Hounslow-heath, as they return from their Sunday-excursions, would be a more open way of robbing them, and certainly not a less dishonourable one.

The French Convention would vote its thanks to a British parliament for such conduct.

In this whole melancholy and difficult business, may we consider the real interests and the honour of the country, and not the passions of the moment!

19 June, 1795.

“ Milton’s political notions were those of an
“ acrimonious and surly republican, for which
“ it is not known that he gave any better rea-
“ son than that *a popular government was the*
“ *most frugal; for the trappings of a monarchy*
“ *would set up an ordinary republic.* It is,
“ surely, very shallow policy, that supposes
“ money to be the chief good ; and even this,
“ without considering that the support and
“ expence of a court is, for the most part,
“ only a particular kind of traffick, for which
“ money is circulated, without any national
“ impoverishment.”

Johnson’s Life of Milton.

THOUGHTS
ON THE
PRINCE's DEBTS.

THIRD EDITION.

MAY 1, 1795.

THESE are not times in which long performances are read; except, perhaps, odes by Peter Pindar, or trials for adultery: and the intention of the few unassuming pages which are here offered to the reader, is not to impose upon the understanding of others, but shortly to submit to my countrymen what has satisfied my understanding, and what I verily think will be satisfactory to a feeling, proud and honourable nation, at large.

The moment is come, which has been so long expected (for it is neither fair nor true to say that we are taken by surprise), the moment is come, which has been expected ever since credit was given to the report of the Prince of Wales's marriage, when the

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dignity

dignity of the country, the situation of the exalted couple, and the feelings of their Royal parent, make it necessary for his Majesty to request, of the liberality and affection of his people, that, while they all agree in rejoicing over the royal nuptials, they will not turn away from the bride and bridegroom, and leave them, as they would shudder to see children or even servants of their own left, in hourly danger of not having a bed to lie on.

This I imagine is the simple fact.

If we can at all complain of being taken by surprise, with regard to a request which has been expected to be announced every day for some months, it is because the same request was made eight years ago; at which time both his Majesty and the Prince, are supposed to have engaged, as far as men can engage for human wisdom, that the country should never again see a necessity for the same request, and that the minister and all parties should never again be embarrassed by having to repeat such a request.

As I only wish the question before us to be examined fairly, I am very ready to grant that this engagement appears to have been entered

entered into as seriously and solemnly as kings and princes, or even gentlemen, can find words to express themselves in: it seems to make the second part of a bargain between the Crown and the people—"We will pay the debts, if father and son will promise that no more shall be incurred."

Well! I am ready to grant that his Majesty and the Prince have not fulfilled their part of the bargain.

This I will grant; though it be at least open to me to *suppose*, that, in 1787, his Royal Highness told Mr. Pitt "he would not pledge himself, to the country, never to run in debt again; *because he did not think the income in question would be found sufficient*, especially too if some of his debts should still be left unpaid;"—that the Prince *desired* Mr. Pitt "would not bind him by any such message," and that, when such a message, contrary to the Prince's wishes, was delivered, his Royal Highness *expressed every possible uneasiness and dissatisfaction to Mr. Pitt*. While Mr. Pitt might have persisted in delivering the message, not from motives which a mean mind would suggest, but from reasons of *regard and good-*

will—that there might be less probability of the Prince's being so involved again. We cannot dictate to gentlemen, who chose to suppose this; nor can we prevent their fortifying themselves in this supposition, and even in *others*, by the Prince's situation with the King and the minister in 1787, and by the account of the whole transaction detailed in the two Annual Registers of that year, which are drawn up by pens leaning two such different ways in party.

Without even *supposing* that such was the case, I will grant what I have said.

His Majesty, however, has a right to call for as much of our concern, as his subjects would readily bestow on a common parent in the same painful situation: royalty, which heaps upon him so many ills that few of his subjects would consent to change places with him, is not to deprive him even of the cheapest boon of pity. We may, therefore, feel for his Majesty's distress; as, certainly, every parent does; but it is not upon him that we can find much blame to throw. Most parents would be happy to join in removing such distress, from such a husband and parent as his Majesty has so long exhibited to us

us in the mirror of example; but the question is, whether the Prince deserve to have such distress removed from him.

His Royal Highness merits, I will say, all that blame, which melts into pity for his royal parent: he has shown himself, by his imprudence, to be no less a man than the rest of his fellow creatures—let me rather say, in plain terms, that, if he acceded to the message of 1787, he has broken his part of the bargain formally made with his father's people—and the question, which the Lords and Commons have to settle, is whether gentlemen can bring themselves to forgive such conduct; whether Britons will shew any pity for a British Prince, whatever they may feel for his royal parent, after such imprudence.

This, then, is granted; and in terms, which even the member for Tewkesbury, who has curtailed his toilet and sacrificed his hair-powder to laudable economy, will not deem too mild.

But I will grant still more; and what, perhaps, his Royal Highness's friends, in either House, will not be very willing to grant,

grant, during the debates: which must be considered as an additional proof of the fairness of these pages.

Secondly, it shall be granted that some of these debts, which the Prince has broken his engagement by contracting, are not such as the people can approve, or as every parent would pardon. There are, among this second list of debts, some, I will grant—or, rather, I will suppose; for I do not, of course, know it—some that the Prince ought not to have contracted; some that have not exactly been incurred by extricating merit from the claws of poverty, or by assisting the necessities of unknown and starving genius, which, according to one of the prefaces written by the present Lord Orford, “may
“be without a villa or a coach, but can
“never be in want of a pencil or of paper.” Yet, let it not be concluded that there are among the debts, none of so creditable a nature; because every one has not heard of such in coffee-houses, nor read of them in newspapers: for this were to expect that his Royal Highness should insert advertisements of the kindnesses he performs, some
of

of which every reader can mention, as regularly as the quack advertises those cures which he does not perform.

For the sake of argument, and of bringing the whole question fairly before us without any reserve whatever, I will grant, in the second place, that no very strict scrutiny might discover, in this second list, more than one debt, perhaps, at the sight of which the Prince would blush; not only on account of the inattention to economy and the imprudence which contracted it, but for other reasons, which, *as long as his Royal Highness does blush*, the lowest of the people has too gentlemanly a mind to wish me to specify.

As what I granted before, was without dwelling on his Royal Highness's having desired not to be bound down by a message, the engagements of which he did not feel himself put in a situation to keep; so will I now, make this second concession, without observing, that, when we all imagine and *argue*, that his Royal Highness was *cleared* in 1787, he was actually left with a remaining load of debt not a great deal, perhaps, short of 100,000*l.* which necessarily operated

rated as the foundation of future incumbrances.

What I have granted is more, I think, than will be expected by all his Royal Highness's enemies; If he can have any enemies, except those who have been made his enemies by this imprudence—who blame his extravagance, while they applaud, and teach their children to applaud, at Sheridan's popular "School for Scandal"—and who, perhaps, without knowing it, revenge their own folly, though not surrounded by any temptations, upon the Prince's want of prudence in the midst of every possible temptation.

"It is pleasant to see how saving we can be for others!" said Francis Bacon, Lord St. Albans, to one of his friends, who lectured him upon want of attention, about pounds, shillings and pence, to which both genius and royalty must descend, and the want of which involved that wonderful man in such a painful situation. But our present business is the painful and embarrassing situation of a Prince of Wales, in whose natural and acquired talents, the same Francis Bacon,

Bacon, the acute historian of Henry VII., would discover the future promise of no common king.

The double censure, which his Royal Highness is said to deserve, on account of the situation, in which, after all, every honest Briton must blush to see him, I have strongly stated, and I candidly admit.

—————" I do not shame

" To tell you what I *was*, since my CONVERSION

" So sweetly tastes, being the thing I *am*."

As You Like It.

But is there not another situation, in which some of us may live to see the Prince? In God's good time, he may have to fill the throne; and, then, we all hope to see him THE FATHER OF HIS PEOPLE. At present his relative situation is such that the people of his royal parent may be said, collectively, with regard to the present question of paying his debts, to be *his father*.

Now, just here it is that I fix my foot.

To this collective national father I say—
behave, towards this your eldest national son,
and one you are justly proud of too in many
C respects,

respects, as any one of us, individually, would behave towards any child of our own.

If I ask any thing, which a single father, who has the ability, would refuse; bend me down under the weight of these royal debts, and place me where smaller debtors are doomed to end their days, without some such just and necessary bill as that which Lord Moira's wisdom and humanity attempted to introduce. Condemn me to the grate of a prison, during life, fishing with the foot of a stocking for farthings which I never feel; if the sternest parent would not grant all I mean to ask.

What I ask (and I will undertake to say the people with me), I will state as plainly, as I have stated the censure which the Prince deserves, and which he would be the first perhaps to throw upon himself.

Pay his debts—give the imprudent Prince and his innocent Princess a bed to lie on—pay his debts; and pay them like men of feeling and gentlemen, not as a Jew would discharge the incumbrances (for even a Jew would discharge them) of a blockhead, in whose illegitimate birth he shares but half the shame—pay them liberally, like Britons, like

like yourselves; pay them EFFECTUALLY, leaving none behind; while you take *effectual* steps, as the legislature *can* do, to make it *impossible* that the turn of his Royal Highness (which is perhaps too liberal and easy, more princely than even a Prince's turn is expected to be) should ever be imposed on again, and that he or even any other Prince should ever again be in the same unprincely situation. Join this kindness towards the country, with your kindness towards the Prince, and we shall all thank Mr. Pitt, and think that *any* sum, necessary for the payment of these debts, is *wisely* bestowed by our representatives, if it can be fairly said to purchase the *impossibility* of our ever being called upon for *any* future debts; more especially when these new nuptials promise (as who does not, for many reasons, hope?) to produce new Princes.

This is what I ask, for our eldest national Prince, of his collective national father; and this is what I assert we should, all, individually, do for a son of our own, with even fewer good points about him than we all know the Prince to have, being able to afford it, and notwithstanding we had already

paid his debts once or even twice. That we should, all, with a father to behave so to us—and that we should complain we were ill used, if he did not—it would be waste of time (the next folly to waste of money) were I to endeavour to prove.

But permit me to ask you, my countrymen—is this a common case of a common father and a common son?

If it be, let us at least say, with common fathers—“ Well! He is married, however, “ thank God! and to one who is likely to “ make him, and all of us happy. That one “ event is worth more, and, some years ago, “ would willingly have been purchased at “ more, than the whole amount of his “ debts.” But is it such a case as I mentioned?

It is not a case of a common father. For, if the Duke of Beaufort's eldest son were a less exemplary and praiseworthy character than he is; and were it necessary that the son's debts should be discharged, for the dignity of the family; the same attention to family dignity would certainly lead the Duke of Beaufort to conduct himself, on such an occasion, towards the Marquis of Worcester, in

in rather a different way from what his Grace's taylor would behave, in the same circumstances, to the heir apparent of that shopboard, from which the long-winded and inexplicable Earl of Carlisle's vice-regal correspondent condescended to *cabbage* an unlucky verb, sitting cross-legged no doubt for its success*.

* From these orgies we frequently sallied forth in quest of adventures, to the no small terror and consternation of all the sober stragglers that came in our way: and, though we never injured, like our illustrious progenitors, the Mohocks, either life or limbs; yet we have, in the midst of Covent Garden, buried a taylor, who had been troublesome to some of our fine gentlemen, beneath a heap of cabbage-leaves and stalks, with this conceit:

Satia te caule quem semper cupisti:

Glut yourself with cabbage, of which you have always been greedy. *Johnson, in the Adventurer; No. 34.*

It is strange how such an expression as *cabbage* could creep into Lord Fitzwilliam's letter to Lord Carlisle. But, when the mind is strongly intent on things, *the sons of heaven*, it easily overlooks words, *the daughters of earth*. Let no one, however, be ambitious of planting this cabbage, because he has seen it accidentally cultivated by a Lord.

In this unfortunate Irish business, one of the best written pamphlets, is "Earl Fitzwilliam's letters and administration rescued from misrepresentation;" Kearsley. From all the pamphlets, and all the debates, this

However, I will build none of the arguments, which I might, on the circumstance of the father's being, in this case, formed out of the collective honour, dignity and pride of a great and haughty people; who certainly would not wish to be less liberal, less willing to make allowances for imprudence, or less forgiving, than almost any father, taken at random out of the mass of the people.

Let me ask my countrymen another question, after this candour towards them; without asking which, I should not show even justice towards the Prince of Wales.

If my candour suffer this to be considered exactly as a case of a common father, is it indeed nothing more than the case of a common son?

It is very far, I assert, from the case of a common son. This collective national father will be guilty of the greatest injustice, of a crime much worse than extravagance, or thoughtless liberality, repeated even unto seventy times seven times, in considering the

this has uniformly come out—that nothing can be more highly honourable or amiable than Lord Fitzwilliam's private character.

eldest

eldest national Prince, with regard to the debts he has contracted, as only in the common situation of a common son.

He who refuses to make allowances, and great ones too, for a Prince, and for such a Prince, in such a country and such times as ours, must want either a head or a heart, or both. The sublime will and testament of the poor King of France speaks of the lenient conduct which he wishes his wretched son to pursue "if he should ever be unfortunate enough to be King." Alas! my friends, were we unfortunate enough to be princes, for only four-and-twenty hours, we should know *some* of the INNUMERABLE temptations, which continually hover and sail round about their exalted station, like eagles round their highest castles. I say nothing of their necessary *miseries*, which would leave them wretched enough to satisfy their worst enemies, even though we payed their petty debts for them every other week. One misery, which a mind of a proper make cannot but feel, arises surely from being thus accountable to the country for every shilling that they spend.

Shall the collective charity of the country
make

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eldest

eldest national Prince, with regard to the debts he has contracted, as only in the common situation of a common son.

He who refuses to make allowances, and great ones too, for a Prince, and for such a Prince, in such a country and such times as ours, must want either a head or a heart, or both. The sublime will and testament of the poor King of France speaks of the lenient conduct which he wishes his wretched son to pursue "if he should ever be unfortunate enough to be King." Alas! my friends, were we unfortunate enough to be princes, for only four-and-twenty hours, we should know *some* of the INNUMERABLE temptations, which continually hover and sail round about their exalted station, like eagles round their highest castles. I say nothing of their necessary *miseries*, which would leave them wretched enough to satisfy their worst enemies, even though we payed their petty debts for them every other week. One misery, which a mind of a proper make cannot but feel, arises surely from being thus accountable to the country for every shilling that they spend.

Shall the collective charity of the country
make

make no allowance for debts, which *almost all of us*, individually, *would* have assisted his Royal Highness, and TOO MANY of us HAVE assisted him, in contracting ?

Shall we make no allowances for debts, the contracting of which was in some measure expected from the Prince's station ? Yes, I say EXPECTED, in the strongest sense of that word ; as we say that " we *expect* the Prince " *will*, now, engage never to be in debt " again, and *keep his engagement*, if we pay " his debts this time"—for I will ask another question—What would honest John Bull, with all his economy, say of a Prince of Wales, who did not spend half his income ; and who regularly placed out the savings of every quarter upon mortgage ? Is it only from a Prince of Wales we expect that he should keep the *precise* line between penuriousness and profusion ?

Whatever John may answer (when his neighbours fret him, as they have lately), he knows that the fine promising fellow hangs John's picture, not only over his settee, but round his neck ; and John and all his family would prefer Charles Surface for a Prince of Wales, before Joseph with all his sentiment.

But

But how old, my countrymen, is your Prince of Wales? He is, now, almost three-and-thirty.—Was he as old, when you *partially* paid his debts, eight years ago? He was, then, but five-and-twenty. Is the age of five-and-twenty in a Prince, in a Prince of Wales, equivalent even to one-and-twenty, the age of prudence in a common subject? Let the most sober and reasonable among us answer; for they, perhaps, are most sensible how difficult it is to resist even temptations of the most common kind.

But the great apology for a Prince's debts, though they *have* been paid once, already, by *the country in which the money circulates*, confessedly arises from the innumerable temptations and snares, in the midst of which he passes every moment of his pitiable existence.

If Mr. Pitt or Mr. Fox can tell what it is to be in embarrassed circumstances, are they able to plead the same temptations, or will their friends urge the same excuses, as we are *bound* to urge and plead for a Prince?

Dryden says, of some one, I remember,

“His birth, perhaps, some petty village hides,

“And sets his cradle out of fortune's way.”

le/ We may say of Princes, those sons of fortune and misery, that their very cradles are set in the highway of temptation. Even the gentlewomen, who are selected to be their wet-nurses, study every method to spoil them; that they may add to their debts, afterwards, by making additions to the pensions of those whose milk they sucked. What kind of milk should we suppose that Prince to have sucked, who, when he grows up, is as careful of the money, which his country gives him *to support the princely dignity and liberality*, as if he earned it by the sweat of his brow; who prefers Cocker's Arithmetic to all the historians; who knows exactly every demand that can be made upon him for money, while he is ignorant of the interests of all the nations by which his father's people are surrounded; and who, in short, might fairly pass for the heir-apparent of a Jew, or the adopted son of a childless annuity-broker?

But there is as little probability of ever seeing a king or a prince resemble such wretched races, as of our having to bow the knee to Brothers or to Halhed on the throne of the Jews. We, all, take especial care not only that our King's children, but that our own should turn out very different characters.

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As to our King's children, and particularly his eldest son; it is no kind of comparison, I assert, to talk of a young man, just come to his fortune, among a set of sharpers, at a hazard table, with false dice. The Prince is beset, if not now, certainly too often, by men and women of every age, description, accomplishment and allurements; all these different birds of prey consider him, too frequently, each as its particular quarry; truth is a tender plant, which very few countries will suit; and in no country is a prince exempted from that general and most cruel curse upon the kind—that he must not have a friend. The elements, alone, venture to speak truth to his august ears; and even of the elements he is, soon, taught almost to change the natures.

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Unlike the gentlemanly footpad or the well-bred house-breaker, some characters about a prince (God forbid that I should say or think so of all!) shew neither mercy nor forbearance; their constant cry is “the country pays all, and it only circulates in the country;” and every thing is considered, like nuts in the hedges, as every body's common property.

My countrymen, shall we make no allowances for a fellow-creature so situated?

To your justice—I will not say to your feelings—to your justice I confidently trust the question; begging you to bear in mind that THIS IS NOT A QUESTION OF PARTY. All I ask of you is to be just to the Prince, to yourselves and to posterity. Though I might, surely, were it necessary, appeal also to your mercy; since we, all, expect those, who are in authority over us, to be merciful as well as just.

- “ The quality of mercy is not strain'd ;
- “ It droppeth as the gentle rain from Heaven
- “ Upon the place beneath. It is twice blessed ;
- “ It blesteth him that gives, and him that takes.
- “ 'Tis mightiest in the mightiest ; it becomes
- “ The throned monarch better than his crown :
- “ His sceptre shows the force of temporal power,
- “ The attribute to awe and majesty,
- “ Wherein doth fit the fear and dread of Kings ;
- “ But mercy is above the scepter'd sway.
- “ It is enthroned in the hearts of Kings ;
- “ It is an attribute to God himself ;
- “ And earthly power doth then show likest God's,
- “ When mercy seasons justice.”

The Merchant of Venice (to the old Shylock of which the Prince and Princess exhibited such an amiable trait of condescension, at the play, lately).

To

To my understanding, I must own, it appears, that, if we do not wipe away royalty, like the wretched French, we cannot, in common justice to present and future times, we cannot, with common wisdom or common pride, suffer him, who probably will be our King, to have his dignity sullied and HIS MIND NECESSARILY DEBASED by continuing in a situation, which a man of honour shudders to think of—especially, too, when, by decreeing that the Royal Family can not be sued for debt, we make it *impossible* for such distress ever to happen again, or such a remedy to be again requested.

His dignity sullied and his mind necessarily debased, I have said and I repeat. For to a liberal and honourable mind what situation can equal the misery of being in debt! If the writer of these pages, or any of his most common readers, would feel the disgraceful slavery of such a situation; what words can even Mr. Wilberforce invent to describe the worse than African bondage, when all this misery is still doubled to a mind elevated by the highest rank, and enlightened by the best education?

And is the present only a public misfortune?

tune? Alas! where is the private family, which is not sometimes soured by the same misfortune—and where is the private father who would not pay his son's debts a second time, having a certain opinion of the son; though *he* could not have any security that he might not be called upon to pay them a third time; *Here*, we are asked to clear a Prince, on an eligible marriage, who never *can* call upon us again; if we put *all* princes in the situation of *sons under age*, to whom credit is given only by fools or rogues.

What—shall prisoners for debt, of every different description, however often they have been bankrupts, ask for an act of grace, on the Prince's happy nuptials; and shall he himself, and his innocent consort, be left in a situation worse than the worst prison?

That Princess, from what we have seen of her, is the best of all pledges that his Royal Highness will give no future cause of national dissatisfaction. Use him like a gentleman in this case, and you bind him so much the more.

At the moment that I am proposing to remove, from the Prince, miseries, of which few among us can form an adequate idea,
idea,

idea; even their May-day majesties are made happy by Mrs. Montagu, and Portman-Square resounds with the honest healths they drink to the royal bride and bridegroom.

But, in all events, you will have shown your liberality; you will have behaved like yourselves; you will have passed that act of grace, towards the first subject in the country, which, *upon his account*, the lowest subjects and debtors not only request, but almost claim as if it were a matter of right.

—Such I verily think are the sentiments of the people in general, upon a question, which I could discuss more at large, and with more arguments, if I had not determined to confine myself to what should prove my candour towards my country, and shew I have no wish on this occasion that a man of honour would be ashamed to own.

John Bull certainly is not capable of deriving any gratification from seeing his Prince reduced to ask, and receive, a favour from him; as the village shopkeeper feels delighted, when the 'squire of his parish wants something, which he can prove his consequence by refusing, or which he can grant

grant in a way to show the superiority he happens to possess.

Much is said about the times in which the debts have been contracted, and the moment at which we are desired to pay them. No individual, among us all, has so much reason to lament the times, as the Prince; whose future throne is made to totter, along with every other throne in Europe. But the times have come upon the debts, not the debts upon the times. The debts were not contracted just at this moment; and the reason we are desired to pay them at this moment is because every friend to the country, and the Royal Family, wished to see the Prince, at such a moment, married. Had his Royal Highness not taken a wife, or not taken one so satisfactory to the people, we of course should have heard nothing of the debts.

To dwell upon inferior and weaker arguments, when the situation of our Prince and his amiable Princess appeals with so much force, pathos and eloquence to all our finest feelings, were almost as wise, and as much to the purpose, as the attempt of the hapless orator who sat for Helston in the session which

which formerly payed the Prince's debts, to attract attention by the charms of his maiden eloquence, immediately after Sheridan's speech on the Begum-charge had captivated every member, and produced an effect unexampled since the use of tongues.

If the legislator do this act of liberality at all, let it be done handsomely—let not a mighty nation descend to the misery of paying so many shillings in the pound—and let them, instead of trying to reduce the debts to £.1000 or £.1500 less, remember what the late Sir James Stonehouse of Berkshire, said to a young man, whose circumstances were embarrassed—"I will extricate you, if you will enable me to do it *effectually*: I will pay your debts, if you will bring them *all* to me, and *leave none, of any sort, behind.*"

Instead of cavilling at such debts as seem improper, but which, were they examined, might not turn out so; let us *call* for them—call even for those which *are* improper, which are *most* improper. Those which are *most* improper will hang most heavy on him hereafter. Address the Prince perhaps, and request that he will be pleased to bring forward *all* demands on him, and to assure

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"the country that *he has done so*." Not only do not suffer his Royal Highness, from honourable feelings which you must respect, to keep *any* debts back; but, if he keep back only one debt of five pounds, do not advance one farthing.

For what is the use of your paying any, if he conceal any? and what is the use of your *examining*, by a committee or in other ways, if you agree to pay the debts.

The debts, which strict and honourable scrutiny would strike out of the list, are exactly, those which false honour persuades a British gentleman that he is, perhaps, MOST OF ALL bound to discharge. The foolish parent boasts that he has cleared his son of every fair and honourable demand upon him; and what is the result? He lives to see his son ruined by still considering himself liable to his debts of honour, at Newmarket, and in St. James's-Street; which I had almost said ought FIRST to have been settled, if he wished REALLY TO CLEAR his son, and to GET HIM OUT OF SUCH HANDS.

There is but the one way I have mentioned in which the debts can be discharged properly, between a Prince who says *habetis conscientem*

fitentem reum and an honourable nation, with true manliness and with real kindness: there are many ways that every tradesman will point out) or rather, on this occasion, every ENGLISH tradesman will *not* point out), in which the debts can be compounded; or put in such a skilful train that the nation shall gain credit neither for liberality nor even for worldly wisdom, and the person obliged shall feel little weight of obligation for a favour, which keeps him intentionally *under the hatches*, to speak familiarly, and makes him almost hate the sight of a benefactor, towards whom, before this, his heart yearned with the truest love. If there be modes of breaking a tacit or an overt engagement not to run in debt again; are there no modes of conferring a kindness so as to cancel every obligation which would otherwise be felt? A certain respectable member meant nothing personal or dangerous; but the only honourable reference this business will bear to the French Revolution is to say there are modes which the best friends of the worst parts of that Revolution would, on this occasion, delight to see us adopt.

John Bull is a fine blunt, honest fellow;

and he will not be offended with me for bluntly reminding him of one of his own sayings, and begging of him, not to *give a Prince, whom, after all, he loves, roast beef and beat him with the spit.*

How this question will go in the Lords and the Commons, we can pretty well guess, if those only vote against it, or use harsh language about it, who would refuse to pay a son's debts, who would not wish a father to pay their own debts, under the same circumstances; or who can say that, without the Prince's temptations, they have committed none of those imprudences, of which the Prince no doubt blushes to have been guilty. Were I one of them, I would close my speech in some such way as Lord Clive concluded his defence—I would finish with begging them to remember that the characters of the Prince and the country are united; and that, if they leave any disgrace upon the Prince's character which they can remove, they at the same time tarnish their own.

Were I a clergyman, I would pray to God (for revolutions only attach me more closely to my God and my King, as

“ — the loud torrent and the whirlwind's roar,

“ But bind him to his native mountains more) —

I would earnestly pray to God that, in return for this kindness, the heir of these royal nuptials, if he succeed to our throne after his father, may with truth apply the lines of the poet of nature, whom his great grandfather had the honour to patronise!

“ — Yes, we have lost A FATHER!

“ The greatest blessing heaven bestows on mortals

“ And seldom found amidst these wilds of time,

“ A GOOD AND WORTHY KING! Hear me, my Tancred,

“ And I will tell thee, in a few plain words,

“ How he deserved that best, that glorious title:

“ 'Tis nought complex; 'tis clear as truth and virtue.

“ He lov'd his people, deem'd them all his children;

“ The good exalted, and depress'd the bad:

“ He spurn'd the flattering crew, with scorn rejected

“ Their smooth advice that only means themselves,

“ Their schemes to aggrandise him into baseness:

“ Well-knowing that a people, in their rights

“ And industry protected; living safe,

“ Beneath the sacred shelter of the laws;

“ Encourag'd in their genius, arts, and labours;

“ And happy, each, as he himself deserves;

“ Are ne'er ungrateful. With unsparing hand,

“ They will for him provide: their filial love

“ And confidence are his unfailing treasury,

“ And every honest man his faithful guard.”

THOMSON'S Tancred and Sigismunda.

Methinks

Methinks I hear the distant and awful voice of posterity conjuring us to seal their future happiness, at this crisis of their fate; and to give them, by our conduct now, in God's good time, such A GOOD AND WORTHY KING, such A FATHER. Posterity shall be gratified, if these hasty pages have any avail; and I will persuade myself that they are not doomed to perish, along with the trash of our trifling days; but that they will remain upon record, in testimony of the terms, on which the Prince of Wales accepts this proof of the nation's affection for his father and the Royal Family, and of OUR SOLEMN EXPECTATIONS FROM THE WHOLE OF HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS'S FUTURE CONDUCT.

MAY 1, 1795.



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THOUGHTS &c. 30

Methinks I hear the distant and awful
voice of posterity commanding us to feel their
future happiness at the crisis of their fate;
and to give them by our conduct now, in
king, such a FATHER. Posterity shall be

The completion and sum of repentance is a change of
life.

RAMBLER, No. 110.

————— If I do *feign*,
Oh let me in my present wildness die;
And never live to *show* the *incredulous* world
The NOBLE CHANGE that I HAVE purposed !

FALSTAFFE's Prince Hal.
Second Part of Henry IV,

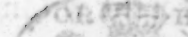
—————

If this won't do, remember I am married ; and you have
all but one opinion of the wife you have persuaded me to
take—let my better half reconcile you all to me.

THE OLD BACHELOR.

THE END.

RAVENS, No. 110.



THE END

